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Temporary Uses Producing Difference in Contemporary Urbanism

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Introduction

Spatial complexity, the temporal dialectic of transience and permanence and the socio-political power of space are integral elements of several established architectural and urban theories. In the formative years of modern urban planning, Geddes conceptualised the city as an evolving realm that both carried influences from the past and involved promises of the future (Koponen, 2006, p. 85). As a planner, he engaged in 'constructive and conservative surgery' that aimed at improving the city's social and spatial conditions with small interventions. After World War II, Rossi (1966) presented the 'theory of monument' and criticised 'naïve functionalism'. He claimed that cities are heterogeneous collages of morphological elements that change in a variety of ways and rhythms. Major buildings, streets and squares, and also recurring large events, can be 'monuments' that drive urban change over long time periods but may also become obsolete. In the United States, Venturi (1966) celebrated the historic layering and non-obvious hybrids of urban architecture. Subsequently, Lefebvre (1974/1991) brought together a new vision about historical and socially produced space that reflects the conditions of its production and simultaneously provides seeds for change. Tschumi's early writings (1981) and projects such as the design of Parc de La Villette in Paris (project 1982, realisation 1984–1987) operationalise the radical thoughts of '68 in an architectural language of event montage, superimposition and cross programming.

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These exemplary writers and practitioners show how the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of urban space can be conceptualised lucidly and without over-simplification (a problem that characterised much of twentieth-century mainstream planning thought). They show that time – evolution, event, simultaneity – is a necessary part of a realistic conceptualisation of urban situations. They also show how fresh conceptualisations can lead to meaningful action.

Today, we are again witnessing a moment of radical change in urban space and practices worldwide. Global capitalism, flows of migrants and fiscal crises define the contemporary landscape. Urban planning, design and architecture are rethought accordingly. Tactical urbanism, urban acupuncture and weak planning are some concepts that have tried to grasp the vector of change. In varying mixes and emphases, actor-orientation, contextuality, eventuality, ephemerality, experiments, participation and open processes characterise most of the new planning ideas. In some form, *temporary uses* figure as an important element in these contemporary approaches. Strangely, though, despite the great interest in the topic, temporary uses remain poorly theorised. They have been studied from an economic perspective (Lehtovuori *et al.*, 2003), particularly after the financial crisis (Bishop and Williams, 2012), and in the context of political theory, especially in relation to the notion of the ‘right to the city’ (Hou, 2010). Some authors cross-examine these two dimensions (for example, Andres, 2013). Furthermore, temporary uses have been discussed as niche innovations in ‘systemic transitions’ of cities and societies (Oswalt *et al.*, 2013). While all these approaches have merits, a general socio-spatial understanding of temporary uses in the contemporary urban context is not well formulated. Specifically, temporary uses’ potential to create better or novel urban environments remains contested and partially understood.

To address this gap in knowledge, we will discuss temporary uses on a theoretical plane, critically and comparatively. Acknowledging temporary uses’ many potentials (see, for example, Lehtovuori *et al.*, 2003, 2015; Groth and Corijn, 2005; Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012), we set out to critically scrutinise temporary uses as a (possible) key element of emerging practices of urban planning, design and management. We discuss the role of temporary uses in the broad picture of urban planning and appropriation of places – of producing space. The notion of ‘difference’ – phrased by different authors as multiplicity, variety, alterity, otherness or heterotopia – is central to our effort to theorise temporary uses.

The difference that temporary uses may produce

The 1960s’ and 1970s’ planning critique was directed firstly against technocratic planning and secondly against the commodification of urban space. The contemporary critique, in comparison, faces considerably weakened

public planning and newly global, intense and even predatory capitalisation of urban spaces and practices. For instance, Sassen (2015) has pointed out a corporate investment surge since 2008. Large corporations have bought whole sectors of urban land and buildings, to invest in luxury megaprojects that threaten the traditional pattern of landownership in cities like New York and London. According to Sassen (2015), the new scale of corporate control reduces the urban 'mix of complexity and incompleteness' that ensures urban rights also for the poor and powerless.

One way in which the difference that temporary uses produce may be discussed is to compare the alternative dynamics between people-based and rooted urbanity and developments led solely by making monetary profits on urban land. Since the late 1990s, temporary uses have been conceptualised as 'catalysts' of urban development or as 'pioneers' of economic regeneration and new urban cultures (Lehtovuori *et al.*, 2003; Haydn and Temel, 2006; Urban Pioneers, 2007). The early analyses highlighted an important tension between two perspectives: temporary uses can be viewed either as instrumental tools of urban planning and management or as intrinsically valuable spaces and processes, often with political and emancipatory connotations. These two ways to think about temporary uses are linked, respectively, to two socio-cultural positions and practical interests, those of the planner/developer and of the activist/user. They also reflect two different sentiments, the planner's (and at times enlightened developer's) hopeful and positive ethos on the potentials that temporary uses may unearth (Bishop and Williams, 2012), and the user's uncertainty and often critical concern about the continuity of the use and the fate of their project, the unique and interesting social and spatial result achieved in a short time and with little money (see, for example, Munzner and Shaw, 2015).

This distinction has opened relatively rich discussions on both the benefits of temporary uses (public and private, societal and commercial; see, for example, Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012, p. 35) and the structural reasons for their current proliferation as an element in urban planning and real estate management practices (see, for example, Bishop and Williams, 2012). However, it fails to theorise temporary uses in a holistic, spatial and forward-looking manner. The key questions about the quality, sustainability and scope of temporary uses as an element of contemporary urbanism at large (and not only of planning and real estate) remain open. Furthermore, the necessary policies to support whatever of importance may have been produced remain uncharted and poorly justified.

Temporary uses, appropriation and the Right to the City

Temporary uses are place-based and involve a development orientation, understood as a stake, shorter or longer, in defining a place and imagining its future (Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012). This imagination can be social

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and even utopian, without direct economic connotations. Temporary uses thus involve some sort of *appropriation* of urban space. They also involve a communal or group-based *creation of value*. Temporary uses engage in conscious *production of space*, involving practices, conceptualisations and experiences (Lefebvre, 1974/1991; Lehtovuori, 2010). These proposals provide a starting point to explore a new theoretical plane for the analysis of temporary uses and their potential in contemporary urbanism.

It is well known that value in the urban context can be studied from many perspectives that broaden it beyond the purely economic. For example, we can talk about the intrinsic value of heritage. More importantly, values are not static. The economic value of a property depends on multiple changing parameters such as its location, aesthetic, connectivity, environment, security and so on (see, for example, Figure 4.1).

Who produces the 'urban values'? Who has a right to them? Lefebvre's (1968/1996) answer is that the users of urban space have collectively and historically produced these values. This is why citizens and users should be able to enjoy equitably the benefits of their 'labour' in the form of a liveable city. The fact that real estate owners and developers generate profits from the



Figure 4.1 NDSM Wharf (www.ndsm.nl) is an example of Amsterdam's strategic approach to temporary uses. The enormous 20,000-square-metre hall and open dock ramps have been operated by Kinetisch Noord, an alliance of artists, performers and architects that combined skills of Amsterdam's former squats. Recently, the area has started to also attract large established users, even to the extent that its 'alternative' character is endangered.

Source: Courtesy of Panu Lehtovuori.

product of this collective labour is rendered questionable or outright wrong. Hence there are conflicts regarding the right to the city. Space is the ultimate locus and medium of struggle, and is therefore a crucial political issue (Elden, 2004, p. 183).

Harvey (2012) questions Lefebvre's ideas. Many analysts claim that 'city' is an obsolete notion, lacking coherence as both a community and a political body. This is exactly the reason to re-configure the idea of right to city as the *right to "reinvent the city"* (Harvey, 2012, p. 4). Temporary uses can be seen as an important arena of such fundamental renewal and reinvention. They involve much more than just "a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies" (Harvey, 2012, p. 4). They often become actively political spaces that show new ways to fill the 'empty signifier' of the right to the city. Through them, activists have "a collective right not only to that which they produce, but also to decide what kind of urbanism is to be produced where, and how" (Harvey, 2012, p. 137). We maintain that the nature of right to the city is dynamic and contested. It is not a right that exists, but a right to act.

Towards a socio-spatial theory of temporary uses – margins, fallows, amenities, commons

The call to act links the right to the city to temporary uses. Important for our discussion is Harvey's contention that "any spontaneous alternative visionary moment is fleeting; if it is not seized at the flood, it will surely pass" (Harvey, 2012, p. xvii). Referring to Lefebvre's writings and experience in '68, Harvey states that "[t]he same is true of the heterotopic spaces of difference that provide the seed-bed for revolutionary movement" (2012, p. 18). In a single place, temporary uses may be fleeting and transitory phenomena, but in the whole urban realm, they are a permanent element, crucial for the liveability and future improvement of the city. To take an example, the performativity of the 'Instant City' of Roskilde Festival depends on its temporary nature. "During the week in which the event takes place, all rigid social manners, limiting norms, moralizing authorities, and dull dress codes are placed on stand-by" (Marling and Kiib, 2011, p. 25). The liberating and creative openness of festivals' spatio-temporal margin is culturally central (Shields, 1992). From the nineteenth-century Paris Commune to contemporary events, the dimension of the carnevalesque 'detouring' of meanings and challenging of rules and established perceptions of 'proper' uses of a place is commonly attached to temporary uses. Concretely, alterity appears occasionally here and there, but culturally it is omnipresent as memory, possibility and desire.

How, then, might the cultural centrality of margins be put in a metropolitan frame and a future perspective? Discussing both the urban form and

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socio-ecological functionality of contemporary city regions, Oswald and Baccini (2003) propose *fallow land* as one of the six morphological aggregates of their *Netzstadt* method of analysis and urban design. Their key assumption is the networked and relational character of cities and city regions. In each scale from region to neighbourhood, a logic of nodes, links and fields is at work. Unlike most theorists of urban process, Oswald and Baccini approve the empty or underused space as an organic and ever-present part of urban form. For them, fallow land is not an exception or a problem, but a necessary category. This conceptualisation works well with Lefebvre's understanding of urban space derived through the notion of a spatial dialectic. Space facilitates the simultaneous co-existence of differences. For Lefebvre, the differences are in tensioned relations, making urban space dynamic and open to change.

Fallow land – and temporary uses as the appropriators of the fallows (such as those in Figure 4.2) – constantly co-produce a differential urban space, containing spaces of hope and spaces of novelty and innovation. We argue that the difference, which temporary uses may create at best, should be seen as *cultural amenities* (Ruoppila, 2014), defined as the desirable features of facilities that increase the specificity of a place. Cultural amenities, places of different sorts of open cultural action, create or maintain diversity, increase



Figure 4.2 Platoon Kunsthalle, Seoul. Platoon Kunsthalle (www.platoon.org), pictured in Seoul, is a network of temporary cultural spaces designed for artists' residences, exhibitions, workshops and events. The network has provided temporary spaces in Seoul and Berlin, and is opening one in Mexico City.

Source: Courtesy of Jamie Allen.

quality of life and, thus, contribute to the public good of all citizens (for example, the historical contribution of urban parks). Such places may also be treated as *commons*, as a shared cultural, intellectual or spatial resource. Hess (2008) has extensively mapped 'new commons', which she defines as "a resource shared by a group where the resource is vulnerable to enclosure, overuse and social dilemmas. Unlike a public good, it requires management and protection in order to sustain it" (Hess, 2008, p. 37). Hess recognises seven types of new commons, of which infrastructural and neighbourhood commons are predominantly urban. Examples range from community gardens to sidewalks and from homeowners' associations to silence in city.

While Sassen's (2015) observations on the corporate investment surge may appear exaggerated in many cities, the increase of floating, essentially global speculative real estate capital is noticeable in any open property market. There is too much money without meaningful moorings. In such an operational environment, the public authorities should develop adequate public policy to emphasise their role as a guardian of non-commodified domains in our cities. Parallel to that, we need to recognise the importance of mutually supported *urban commons* that are independent of both public and private action and ownership. This independence makes commons an increasingly important alternative space, a statement that may sound surprising in the light of the cry of 'the tragedy of the commons' (see Hardin, 1968; Ostrom and Ostrom, 1977). Furthermore, the specific nature of urban commons as resources that increase through use (think of a lively square) has not been fully recognised.

Discussing urban commons, Harvey (2012) claims that *[p]ublic spaces and public goods in the city have always been a matter of state power and public administration. ... While these public spaces and public goods contribute mightily to the qualities of the commons, it takes political action on the part of citizens and the people to appropriate them or to make them so. There is always a struggle over how the production of and access to public space and public goods is to be regulated, by whom, and in whose interests.*

(Harvey, 2012, pp. 72–73)

Indeed, conflicts and struggles are crucial in (re)creating public urban space as political space that can drive social change (Lehtovuori *et al.*, 2015). Stating the importance of defending the flow of public goods as material for the commons, Harvey argues that the commons *is not to be construed ... as a particular kind of thing, asset or even social process, but as an unstable and malleable social relation between a particular self-defined social group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet-to-be-created social and/or physical environment deemed crucial to its life and livelihood.*

(Harvey, 2012, p. 73)

A foundational relation between space and the group that appropriates it characterises the unique places that are produced by temporary users. This specific place-based relation *defines* the potential, uniqueness, novelty and difference of urban commons and cultural amenities. While this key relation should be both communal and non-commodified, the concept and use of commons do not exclude the possibility of monetary benefit to the appropriating group. "A community garden can thus be viewed as a good thing in itself, no matter what food may be produced there. This does not prevent some of the food being sold" (Harvey, 2012, p. 74). Furthermore, commons are likely to require state protection against "the philistine democracy of short-term moneyed interests. ... The production and enclosure of non-commodified spaces in a ruthlessly commodifying world is surely a good thing" (Harvey, 2012, p. 70). This contention and related policy advice will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.

Difference driven by users

Bishop and Williams (2012) argue that vacancies produced as a result of current economic and property development trends, the spatial demands unmet by the market, and the social media which help to spread the message about the vacancies among potential users (not recognised by the owner) together favour alternative, adaptive development strategies that rely increasingly on temporary uses. They claim that exploring meanwhile activities (such as those in Figure 4.3) and "appreciation of experimentation" have intensified into a trend of "temporary urbanism," which also those who govern the cities should take into account (Bishop and Williams, 2012, p. 35). The winds of change are certainly noticeable in recent studies introducing several new concepts relating to the temporariness and changed character of the production of urban space. What these concepts have in common is their emphasis on the role of new actors in the shaping of places. Some of the concepts focus on practical improvements to public spaces, and others on conscious efforts to produce alternative political niches from which to challenge the capitalist urban process.

In the first category, the idea of "DIY urbanism" (Douglas, 2014) and "everyday urbanism" (Kelbaugh, 2007) does not challenge the economic order, but questions who is acknowledged as an actor who may change urban space. Douglas (2014, p. 6) defines do-it-yourself (DIY) urbanism as "small scale and creative, unauthorized yet intentionally functional and civic-minded 'contributions' or 'improvements' to urban spaces in forms inspired by official infrastructure." Such practices include, for instance, guerrilla gardening, or traffic markings or promotional signage installed by community members (Douglas, 2014, p. 6). The acts are small-scale modifications, diversifying interpretation of the present situation. Likewise, Kelbaugh (2007, p. 12)



Figure 4.3 Restaurant Day (www.restaurantday.org), pictured in Helsinki, is the world's biggest food carnival and an example of everyday urbanism contributing to lively public spaces. The idea is that during this particular day, anyone can set up a restaurant for a day without permits. In 16 May 2015, 2497 temporary restaurants opened in altogether 34 countries.

Source: Courtesy of Martti Tulenheimo.

defines everyday urbanism as situated and tolerant, celebrating “ordinary life, with little pretense of creating an ideal environment” appropriating space on sidewalks, parking lots and vacant lots for informal commerce and festivities. Celebrating grassroots quality, everyday urbanism “is more personal, political and democratic than the standard ‘product’ built and financed by mainstream developers and banks” (Kelbaugh, 2007, p. 15). Moreover, “its very abilities to fly below the organized financial radar and work in the gaps and on the margins have allowed it to empower disadvantaged people and disenfranchised communities” (Kelbaugh, 2007, p. 15).

Both approaches conceptualise individuals as ‘fixing’ things where their actions are analogous to formal efforts, where the formal efforts are absent. This point is missed by Iveson (2013), who discusses the (traditional) politics of the DIY urbanism, and the extent to which such micro-spatial practices constitute a new form of urban politics that might give birth to a more just and democratic city. For him, single actions hardly suffice, yet prospects exist if small-scale projects were to coalesce into large-scale change. However, this would require practitioners to “make themselves parties to a disagreement over the forms of authority that produce urban space” (Iveson, 2013, p. 942). The DIY practitioners interviewed by Douglas (2014) would

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probably find such a political dichotomy and the subsequent requirement of strict organisation an uncomfortable idea. Nonetheless, most would probably consider their actions to be contributing to participatory democracy and highlighting some prospects of change.

In the second category, taking a more radical stance, the ideas of 'autonomous urbanism' (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006; Vasudevan, 2014) and the 'insurgent city' (Hou, 2010) stand in antagonistic relationship with mainstream economic development and the urban planning it supposedly subordinates. Autonomous urbanism refers to "spaces where people desire to constitute non-capitalist, egalitarian, and solidaristic forms of political, social, and economic organization through a combination of resistance and creation" (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006, p. 1). Accordingly, the insurgent city indicates the political role of a city's public urban space as an arena of demonstration, a forum for creating new publics and a vehicle of resistance. Both consider social movements as 'grassroots urban planning agents' (Souza, 2006) radically redefining the significance and use of a location through place-bound activism, thereby representing an alternative development method (see, for example, Figure 4.4). In addition to social criticism, direct action, including independent implementation of solutions, despite the state apparatus or even against it, is necessary (Souza, 2006, pp. 328–329).



Figure 4.4 Berlin squats. On many occasions, the legacy of the temporary political counterculture has been acknowledged, and the squats have been legalized in Berlin. Working across Germany, Mietshäuser Syndikat (www.syndikat.org) provides a unique organizational model to combine projects' alternative or radical character and their economic sustainability.

Source: Courtesy of Vesa Peipinen.

Temporary uses, regeneration and gentrification

Temporary uses have a rather impressive track record in generating new ideas, nurturing ideas about future transformation opportunities and drawing novel attention to unused or under-used spaces. This makes them frequent drivers of regeneration. Authors have placed varying emphases on the subject, depending on their viewpoint. On the one hand, there are those who focus on the spaces produced by temporary uses. They consider the ability to create novel kinds of urban environments and to rethink public spaces to be positive and the scope to experiment with alternative uses within looser regulatory frameworks to be fruitful (for example, Lehtovuori *et al.*, 2003; Urban Pioneers, 2007; Stevens and Ambler, 2010; Bishop and Williams, 2012). These writers consider temporary use as an approach to ensure diversity and alternative space provision. On the other hand, there are those whose focus has been on how the actors of temporary uses who have successfully reworked a space may sustain their position in the long run. They have tended to a more critical view (for example, Colomb, 2012; Shaw, 2014; Munzner and Shaw, 2015). For instance, Colomb's (2012) account of Berlin shows how the gradual enlistment of temporary uses by policy makers and real estate developers for urban development and place-marketing purposes has put pressure on their very existence and experimental nature. The consequence has been various trajectories of displacement, transformation, commodification, disappearance and intense local conflicts. From the latter perspective, one can argue that, like other forms of culture-led urban regeneration, temporary uses – no matter how alternative they are – have an “inherent tendency to pave the way for profit-oriented urban development process” (Colomb, 2012, p. 147).

Andres (2013) has made an illuminating conceptual distinction between temporary ‘place shaping’ and formal ‘place making’ and discussed how the first is likely to be taken over by the second. The initial opportunity is caused by a series of ‘deadlocks’ in the planning system; that is, economic, urban or political disruptions, leading to an alternative transformation (Andres, 2013, p. 760). ‘Place shaping’ refers to a set of practices for appropriations of differential spaces, “encouraged by a context of weak planning or a ‘watching stage’ which refers to a period during which the desired future for an area cannot be accomplished” (Andres, 2013, p. 762). If the temporary uses can raise an interest in the area or even provide plausible ideas for its development, the ‘weak planning’ context is likely to be replaced by development-led ‘master planning’, involving an entrepreneurial approach and a set of place-making strategies formalised with the purpose of redeveloping the site. The question then becomes whether (and to what extent) the process will ensure the legacy of temporary uses.

The game of cat and mouse between grassroots cultural users (the most typical temporary users) and real estate capital seeking to build on their

success is a story frequently told in urban studies (see, for example, Zukin, 1989). Given the long-lasting trends of regeneration and gentrification, the process of the cultural re-signification of locations can be considered one of the core elements of contemporary urban dynamics. Within it, however, cultural actors involved in place shaping are exposed to the risk of becoming the victims of their own success. They may be welcome to come to try out new things, but if they are successful, the willingness to replace them with place-making actors and activities is likely to increase. However, with this shift, the very cultural activity that gave the place its distinction and attractiveness may vanish (Ruoppila, 2014).

Unsurprisingly, in a comparative study by Andres (2013), a marginal location seemed better in terms of avoiding gentrification and conflicts, and in providing the temporary actors with a long-term role in planned place making and, thus, in sustaining the difference created while they were shaping the place. Németh and Langhorst (2014) conclude that low economic pressures, recession and a shrinking population may benefit temporary uses. While a sufficiently central location is an important pre-requisite for effective action, we have in our earlier work concluded that almost any type of urban environment has potential for temporary uses. In central urban areas, under-used areas or areas losing significance, temporary uses are tuned accordingly for intensification, initiation or redefinition of their locations (Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012).

Where temporary uses are effective means to raise property values in the areas where they occur, they have sometimes been incorporated into policy agendas. Creative city strategies often include alternative cultural actors and transforming spaces, although they are treated mainly as exploitable resources to expand commoditised activities (Peck, 2005). For instance, Colomb (2012, p. 144) describes how, in Berlin, the capability of temporary uses to redefine former industrial or infrastructural landscapes symbolically and programmatically has set the scene for commercial redevelopment. However, while temporary uses may be seen as useful for marketing or content creation purposes, the relevant policies tend to omit necessary support, which eventually undermines their impact (Bader and Bialluch, 2008). At the same time, with the worldwide trend of gentrification and increased redevelopment and regeneration of inner cities, it is increasingly difficult for actors to find cheap central places in which to experiment. In summary, the criticism of temporary uses stems largely from viewing them as a mechanism that inevitably leads to gentrification or commercial development – with the consequent displacement of the original actors and, eventually and at the worst, leaving no central spaces for such uses (see, for example, Shaw, 2014).

We find this critique and the implied risk analysis valuable in stressing the (at times) detrimental power imbalances between the actors, but we also consider it too straightforward and biased for two reasons. Firstly, because

of the experimental nature of temporary uses, it is unlikely that all of them would become permanent. And even if they did, such uses do not always need to remain in their original places. Experiments should follow the logic of inventions – the best will become innovations, while others will experience a shorter life span. Moreover, the availability of short leases encourages the trying of something new, which can be fruitful in its own terms. In addition, apart from a use being transient – that is, taking place only once, for a limited time – or becoming permanent, there are other alternatives. Temporary uses can be recurrent, that is, repeating, for instance annually (such as Paris Plages, bringing beaches to the Seine's banks every summer since 2002); or migrant, that is, the activities may move from one location to another as development proceeds (such as the New York Trapeze School – see Figure 4.5 – which changed its temporary location repeatedly following phases of Manhattan's Hudson River Park development); or the activities can move to an entirely new location. If a temporary use eventually transforms into a permanent use, this usually happens after it has become popular and consequently is perceived as an essential element of the new character of a place because of the difference it makes.

Secondly, the whole gentrification process is often considered in too straightforward and black-and-white terms. A common distortion is to associate gentrification with a total transformation (Metaal, 2007, p. 12).



Figure 4.5 Trapeze School. Trapeze School New York was initially a migrant temporary use, operating in several locations during the development of Manhattan's Hudson River Park. After becoming a popular feature, it was granted a permanent place in the regenerated waterfront.

Source: Courtesy of Richard Dottinger, 2015.

Metaal (2007) distinguishes between the 'artistic' (free-thinking pioneers), 'mixed' (socially and culturally conscious middle class) and 'fashionable' (wealthy professionals) phases of gentrification, and argues that urban neighbourhoods rarely go through the entire process. Unlike many dichotomist analysts, Metaal considers only the last phase to be problematic. He views the beginning of the process as positive, because "in the first instance, gentrification means opportunities for the survival and expansion of urbanity in various guises" (Metaal, 2007, p. 26). In contributing to the development of mixed neighbourhoods, it supports diverse urbanity "in the form of historically expanded buildings as well as in the varied supply of amenities and the maintenance of a public culture" (Metaal, 2007, p. 26). Ironically, in the last phase, "gentrification can become the victim of its own success" (Metaal, 2007, p. 26). Hence, in Metaal's 'artistic' and 'mixed' phases, (successful) temporary uses would be more likely to survive the pressure of displacement, although they had contributed to rising property values. Nevertheless, under a profit-seeking regime, temporary users are indeed vulnerable, especially given the still-limited understanding of their profound value for urbanism and of the positive spill-over effects for places that arise from such uses. Hence, in the conclusion, we argue for a policy supportive of temporary uses.

Conclusion: non-commodified spaces in a commodifying city

The differences that temporary uses can produce can be conceptualised in three ways. Firstly, being experimental, temporary uses can be seen as spatial or social innovations characterised by new types of spaces, uses and organisation. Secondly, temporary uses facilitate new actors to contribute to urban transformation. They give voice and agency to people and groups who otherwise would be invisible. Thirdly, temporary uses may be consciously political alternatives to capitalist urban processes and spaces. Not all uses and users are political, however, which is important to note.

Temporary uses are an increasingly important part of creative and socially responsible urban planning and development. They do, however, require safeguarding and cultivating. Hence, we argue for developing a policy to evaluate and support the sustainability of the 'best' or 'successful' temporary uses. Such a policy should not only exploit temporary uses and users as a resource, but also give them resources and protect them in contested locations, that is, locations of interest to profit-seeking developers. To rate a 'success' is of course tricky, but at least the following dimensions should be considered. The first is the uniqueness of the place: a socio-spatial innovation, a design or a use concept, which a combination of actors has managed to create. The second is the value of the action that the space enables, whether the benefit is derived from insight and reflection, social

cohesion, place-related economic impact (for example, providing a new kind of hub) or leisure functions. The third is the difference and variation that it provides in the wider urban fabric. Differential spaces and places, an urban environment with open new possibilities, dynamism and controversy are valuable in themselves, as well as constituting a cultural amenity or an urban common, as discussed in this chapter.

Of course, the question of the extent to which temporary uses could or should be seen as seeds of permanent uses does not have one answer. The field of temporary uses is highly varied. Permanence is not always a necessary or a recommended goal. Ephemerality, recurrence or migration may be an integral part of the use and the quality that it produces.

Importantly, we argue for the co-existence of a mixture of uses, in which some could be saved from displacement for the enriching elements they are able to provide for their locales. To this end, such uses (and spaces) would need to be conceptualised as non-commodified spots, with adequate policies implemented to secure their status. This should be of interest to all parties, given that the activity that is generated may contribute to rising property values in the vicinity. As Douglas (2014, p. 20) puts it, “we must remember that in many cities today development capital is quite happy to take advantage of any ‘sign of life’ and run with it.” What is being done in those particular places and properties occupied by temporary uses and users should be valued especially for the difference that is produced.

The urban field, including the place-based novelties and critical practices of temporary uses, is dynamic and tensioned. Temporary uses make visible and tangible the difference between the ‘isotopy’ of the space of capitalism and state power and the ‘heterotopy’ of actual and changing urban practices. Temporary uses challenge established planning practices and the sources of power behind them. They represent the future in the making. As Harvey notes,

we do not have to wait upon the grand revolution to constitute such spaces [of political difference] Lefebvre’s theory of a revolutionary movement is the other way round: the spontaneous coming together in a moment of ‘irruption’, when disparate heterotopic groups suddenly see, if only for a fleeting moment, the possibilities of collective action to create something radically different.

(Harvey, 2012, p. xvii)

Experiments, tests, moments and irruptions are pervasive in urban society, producing pathways towards different societies and different spaces. Changes in and the evolution of preferred locational attributes, use rights and rents, and consequently the relation of temporary uses to the mainstream real estate process, are constant. Collectively, therefore, temporary uses play a big, constructive, societal role. Once better understood and adequately supported, they may become a key element of an emerging practice of urban planning, design and management.



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